

## PREFACE

This year marks 60 years since the Department of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences (later the W. Szafer Institute of Botany) was established. This year also marks the centenary of the Institute of Botany and the 230<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Botanical Garden, both at the Jagiellonian University. Therefore, not without reason, the year 2013 was proclaimed the Year of Botany in Cracow.

Botany has always played an important role in the scientific life of Cracow. Formed in 1953, the Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences has always been a strong research institution and, together with the Institute of Botany at the Jagiellonian University, was a major, dynamically functioning botanical research centre which exerted a profound influence on the development of botany in Poland. The history of the two institutions is closely related, not only because of the proximity of location but by the personal interaction between professors in the Academic Society of Cracow, Academy of Sciences and Letters, the Physiographic Committee and Polish Academy of Sciences and Letters, whose legacy was largely taken over by the Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences. At the core of these institutions' activities lie the achievements of such eminent Cracow botanists, as Feliks Berdau (1826–1895), Józef Rostafiński (1850–1928), Marian Raciborski (1863–1917) and Władysław Szafer (1886–1970).

The first academics who laid the foundations for the development of the Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences were recruited primarily from researchers of the Institute of Botany of the Jagiellonian University, and partly also from the State Geological Institute. As is usually the case, especially in difficult and rapidly changing times, the early history of the Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences is somewhat confusing and entangled, and the difficulty in establishing the facts results in incomplete documentation.

It is even difficult to identify the work places and positions occupied by some staff as at the rooms in the building at Lubicz 46 street were occupied by scientists from both institutions, and their posts were paid partly by the Polish Academy of Sciences and partly by the Jagiellonian University. Only after obtaining the status of an independent research institution as the Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences in 1956, did the history of botany in the two closely related institutions begin to separate. However, researchers from both institutions always maintained close contact and worked together on a number of joint projects. Some important botanical works, such as *Szata roślinna Polski* (*Vegetation of Poland*) were co-authored by botanists from both institutions. The Institute

of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences, from the very beginning recruited staff and PhD students from the Institute of Botany of the Jagiellonian University, which has a predominantly teaching role.

The institution that bonds the two botanical unit is the Polish Botanical Society (PBS). The Cracow branch of the PBS is one of the few that runs weekly “Thursday meetings” (in the B. Pawłowski Hall on the second floor of the building at Lubicz 46 street), hosting speakers representing all the universities in Cracow, and also from other scientific centres in the country.

In view of the common roots and scientific ties, the directors of the Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences as well as Institute of Botany and Botanical Garden at the Jagiellonian University decided to celebrate all of these momentous anniversaries by organising joint Jubilee Celebrations. The main celebrations are planned for 19–21 September, but throughout the 2013 year, there have been organised series of meetings, conferences and scientific exhibitions presenting the achievements of Cracow’s universities and the institutions of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

For the Jubilee Celebrations of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the W. Szafer Institute of Botany two comprehensive studies were prepared: a *History of research and development at the W. Szafer Institute of Botany, Polish Academy of Sciences (1953–2012)* edited by Barbara Godzik and Konrad Wołowski and a two-volume *Bibliography of the W. Szafer Institute of Botany, Polish Academy of Sciences (1953–2012)* compiled by Ryszard Ochyra, Halina Bednarek-Ochyra and Barbara Godzik. These publications present a detailed history of the foundation and studies conducted by various departments and laboratories at the Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences, as well as all the published achievements of the past 60 years.

Many people assisted us in the production of the present book. First of all, we would like to thank the authors of the individual chapters on the history and research carried out in the different laboratories and departments of the Institute of Botany, Polish Academy of Sciences. Without their effort, this book could not have been published.

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Readers are also welcome to visit the website of the W. Szafer Institute of Botany (<http://www.botany.pl>) where the latest information about the research, current activities and scientific events at the Institute can be found.

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